

Cynthia Evans (CAI), and  
Brandon McMullen  
(Granite).



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CASE STUDY

# Central Asia Institute transitioned from traditional IT support to modern services with Granite.

## A LONG-STANDING Relationship

Central Asia Institute and Granite Technology Solutions have had a long-standing business relationship for years, starting in 2014. Services and support have been provided, and trust has been built. In the last few years, Granite has brought CAI modern business technology solutions with a hosted phone system upgrade, cloud server migration project, and managed IT services.

While CAI and Granite may have started working together with traditional IT support and phone systems -- both companies have taken steps toward the future with modern services.

**“Being with Granite for a number of years gave us the confidence to make changes.”**

CYNTHIA EVANS, ACCOUNTING MANAGER, CENTRAL ASIA INSTITUTE

# "We didn't even know what we were missing before we signed up for Managed IT Services."

CYNTHIA EVANS, ACCOUNTING MANAGER, CENTRAL ASIA INSTITUTE

## OVERVIEW

### Managed IT Services

For several years, Central Asia Institute has relied on Granite for IT support, transitioning from a reactive 'break-fix' model to a proactive managed IT services plan. Under the 'break-fix' model, labor was billed by the hour and support was sought internally first to minimize service calls and costs. However, switching to managed IT services brought comprehensive improvements.

Now, hardware upgrades are strategically planned well in advance, support is readily available without internal escalation, and Granite handles software updates and security, freeing the Central Asia Institute to concentrate on their philanthropic mission. Regular business reviews with Granite provide insights into support queries and hardware roadmapping.

## RESULTS



### Hardware

Computers are monitored and managed, firmware is updated, and upgrades are strategically planned in advance.



### Time

Managed IT services act like an insurance policy, ensuring that when the inevitable IT issues arise, they're handled efficiently by professionals like Granite, allowing CAI to focus on fundraising, managing grants, and engaging with donors.



Central Asia Institute advances education for girls and women in remote and mountainous regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.



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## Cybersecurity Awareness Training

At Central Asia Institute, Cybersecurity Awareness Training is taken seriously. The team diligently completes their monthly trainings, aiming for the perfect score of 800. These quick yet insightful sessions have significantly improved CAI's approach to cybersecurity, with content that's up-to-date with current events and seasonal considerations.

While managing these trainings requires effort, the CAI leadership actively promotes and reminds their team to complete their training demonstrating CAI's commitment to safeguarding its IT systems and data from cyberthreats.

**"Having Granite as our IT department satisfies the board, and the auditors."**

CYNTHIA EVANS  
ACCOUNTING MANAGER  
CENTRAL ASIA INSTITUTE

## Digital Transformation and Roadmapping

With Central Asia Institute now under a proactive, managed services plan, it's time for business reviews. These reviews are a chance for Granite and CAI to go over the hardware assets and inventory, software and applications, and security trainings. Specifically, the hardware inventory review is key for deciding which computers need replacing, which can last a bit longer, and which can be redistributed as necessary. Additionally, the notes from these reviews are vital for auditors to verify that Central Asia Institute is taking the necessary steps to stay secure.



**“Our success story with Central Asia Institute is due to their understanding in protecting their business and employees through modern cybersecurity tools paired with a supported IT infrastructure.”**

BRANDON MCMULLEN  
TECHNICAL ACCOUNT MANAGER  
GRANITE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



## Phone System Upgrade

### THE BACKSTORY

Central Asia Institute had been using a traditional NEC phone system from Granite for years, but with the shift towards remote work and employees spread across various states, they upgraded to a hosted phone system from Granite.

Now, calls can be smoothly transferred to remote workers or those on the go, and donors can easily reach the right team members thanks to the hosted system and Elevate softphone app.

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### THE RESULTS

- Donors are easily transferred to the right team
- Remote employees and in-office employees are connected
- Calls can be answered from wherever, whenever

## Cloud Migration Project

For years, Central Asia Institute relied on an on-premise server maintained by Granite. However, the time arrived for a pivotal choice: to continue with the on-premise solution or transition to the cloud. Brian McMillan, Granite's Technical Sales Engineer, had been a long-time advisor to CAI, weighing the advantages and disadvantages, the gains, and the potential setbacks.

After some deliberation, the decision to migrate their server to M365 cloud services was made. The project kicked off, and soon everything was running smoothly, almost as if nothing had ever changed. Users had no trouble accessing their files, and they even got to enjoy new benefits like document recovery and tracking changes through version history. CAI adapted seamlessly. The success of the server project can be largely attributed to Central Asia Institute's established trust and previous experiences with Granite, which provided them with reliable consulting, and project management.